

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-07

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R 191625Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4102

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6381

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IZ, IR

SUBJECT: ALLEGED IRAQI EXECUTION OF KURDISH PRISONERS

REF: STATE 114552

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT INFO CONTAINED IN HOAGLAND STORY ORIGINATED WITH EX-KDP SECRETARY GENERAL HABIB MUHAMMAD KARIM, WHO PASSED THROUGH BEIRUT SEVERAL DAYS AGO AND CONFIDED IT TO LOCAL KURDISH SYMPATHIZERS. KARIM REPORTEDLY IDENTIFIED SLAIN KURDISH MILITARY COMMANDER AS LT. "FERIDOUN", WHO FORMERLY LED PESH MERGA BATTALION IN BABA GURGAR AREA AND WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR KURDISH SABOTAGE EFFORTS AGAINST OILFIELD INSTALLATIONS DURING RECENT IRAQI-KURDISH HOSTILITIES. WE ARE TOLD HE SUBSEQUENTLY FLED TO IRAN, BUT DECIDED--AGAINST ADVICE OF BARZANI'S AIDES--TO RETURN TO NORTH IRAQ AND BE AMNESTIED. IRAQIS REPORTEDLY ARRESTED HIM AT HAJJ UMRAN ON MAY 5 AND LIQUIDATED HIM ON MAY 7. THIRTY-EIGHT KURDS WHOSE EXECUTIOS REPORTEDLY CAUSED UNREST IN IRBIL WERE DESCRIBED BY KARIM AS PERSONS JAILED BY IRAQIS OVER PAST FEW MONTHS FOR REASONS (PETTY RACKETERRING, ETC.) HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH KURDISH REBELLION. HE WAS UNABLE TO EXPLAIN WHY IRAQIS KILLED THEM AND SUBSEQUENTLY RETURNED THEIR BODIES TO THEIR FAMILIES IN IRBIL.

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2. KARIM INDICATED THAT ABOVE INFO WAS ACQUIRED BY KDP INTELLIGENCE APPARATUS STILL BEING OPERATED BY MASOUD BARZANI, WHO HAS BEEN INFILTRATING AGENTS BACK INTO NORTH IRAQ FROM IRAN. HE CLAIMED THAT 98,000 IRAQI KURDS--INCLUDING AROUND 10,000 ORGANIZED PESH MERGA--REMAIN IN IRANIAN REFUGEE CAMPS, AND THAT FEW OF THEM ARE LIKELY TO RETURN TO IRAQ. THEIR NUMBER REPORTEDLY INCLUDES (A) KURDS FROM KIRKUK AND KHANAQIN AREAS, WHERE (ACCORDING TO KARIM) NO RETURNING KURDS ARE BEING ALLOWED TO RESETTLE BY IRAQI AUTHORITIES, (B) PERSONS PROMINENT IN KDP AND BARZANI'S ENTOURAGE, AND (C) MANY MEMBERS OF BARZANI'S OWN TRIBE. KARIM ALSO ALLEGED THAT ALL PERSONS FORMERLY SERVING IN IRAQI ARMY OR POLICE WHO DEFECTED TO KURDISH SIDE DURING RECENT HOSTILITIES ARE BEING ARRESTED BY IRAQIS UPON THEIR RETURN FROM IRAN AND ARE BEING HELD IN "CONCENTRATION CAMP" AT DIWANIYYAH SOUTH-WEST OF BAGHDAD. KARIM ESTIMATED SOME 23,000 PERSONS ARE NOW IN THIS CAMP.

3. KARIM ALSO DESCRIBED BARZANI AS "STILL IN CONTROL" OF KURDISH EXILES IN IRAN, BUT "SITTING TIGHT" TO SEE WHAT DEVELOPMENTS MARK FUTURE IRAQI-IRANIAN RELATIONS. IRANIANS REPORTEDLY HAVE PERMITTED BARZANI TO TAKE UP WELL-GUARDED RESIDENCE AT NAQQADAH NEAR NORTH IRAQI BORDER AND ARE STILL SUPPLYING HIM WITH MONEY. KARIM SAID KDP POLITBURO HAS BEEN "STREAMLINED" INTO A COMMITTEE WHICH INCLUDES CHAFIQ QAZZAZ, SAMI IDRIS, MUHSEN DIZ'I AND MAHMOUD OTHMAN. KARIM HIMSELF REPORTEDLY PLANS TO ACT AS BARZANI'S MAJOR REP ABROAD AND WILL PROBABLY MAKE CAIRO HIS MAIN HEAD-QUARTERS.

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